



CONNECTICUT

**TESTIMONY OF
NATIONAL FEDERATION OF INDEPENDENT BUSINESS (NFIB)
ANDY MARKOWSKI, CONNECTICUT STATE DIRECTOR
OPPOSING
SB-220, AAC THE INCLUSION OF LABOR HISTORY IN THE
PUBLIC SCHOOL CURRICULUM
BEFORE THE
LABOR & PUBLIC EMPLOYEES COMMITTEE
FEBRUARY 27, 2014**

A non-profit, non-partisan organization founded in 1943, NFIB is Connecticut's and the nation's leading small-business association. In Connecticut, NFIB represents thousands of members and their employees. NFIB membership is scattered across the state and ranges from sophisticated high technology enterprises to "Main Street" small businesses to single-person "Mom & Pop" shops that operate in traditional ways. NFIB's mission is "To promote and protect the right of its members to own, operate, and grow their businesses." On behalf of those small- and independent- job-providers in Connecticut, I offer the following comments:

NFIB/Connecticut has concerns with SB-220, and suggests rejection. More than a quarter of small business owners in America report that it is difficult for them to find qualified employees, even in a depressed economy. Yet this bill seems ignore the real problems with our public education system and clutters up the curriculum in Connecticut with more instructional mandates. Additional mandates on our teachers and public school systems, especially at this critical time of ongoing education reforms in Connecticut, will only further burden our cities, towns and ultimately property taxpayers, including small businesses.

Small employers often cite that a problem with our public education system is that it is not producing enough people with the critical skills that our economy needs. They feel that the purpose of the public education system is to prepare students for life in the workforce. Small business owners see young people every day who emerge from the public school system without the basic skills necessary get a job, support themselves or someday perhaps even start their own businesses. What is troubling about this legislation is that it ignores the real problems in the curriculum.

While the bill mandates the history of organized labor and free market capitalism and entrepreneurialism, these topics are already significantly covered as part of the existing curriculum in various grades. Furthermore, when it comes to entrepreneurial education, the NFIB Young Entrepreneur Foundation, a 501(c)(3) educational foundation, has developed a three module supplemental entrepreneurship curriculum for high school classrooms and already provides this curriculum to educators and school districts that are interested, without cost, and without the need for legislative mandate. Professional educators, school boards and parents are best positioned to determine what our kids need to learn.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment, and NFIB urges lawmakers to take no action on SB-220.